

## SOME NEW PLANT RECORDS FOR WEST BENGAL FROM JALPAIGURI DISTRICT<sup>1</sup>

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Jalpaiguri district has a rectangular shape, the length being from west to east and it lies at the foot of the hills south of Kalimpong division of Darjeeling district and the western part of Bhutan. The district is bounded on the east by Assam and on the south by Coochbehar district and Bangladesh. It is mainly a plain tract with the exception of Buxaduar hills which are the only mountainous tract and faces north.

The area, though visited by a number of botanists from time to time, has not yet been well explored and the floristic data specifically required for this district, is almost negligible in literature so far published.

Eight exploration trips to twenty different forest ranges under four forest divisions including the cultivated lands, waste lands, marshy areas, etc., were undertaken during the year 1975 to 1977 and about 1100 species collected and identified. On the basis of recent investigations on the flora of Jalpaiguri district, I found a good number of plants not reported previously from West Bengal (Prain 1903 & 1903a, 1905; Culshaw 1950; Mukerjee 1965; Bennet 1966; Matthew 1966; Dutta & Majumdar 1966; Vuppuluri Sharma 1969; Guha Bakshi & Naskar 1969 and others) and thus form new records for the state. A list of such plants with short diagnostic characters, flowering & fruiting, distributional notes, ecological features, etc. is given below. The herbarium sheets of the specimens examined are deposited in the Central National Herbarium (CAL).

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### RUBIACEAE

**Hedyotis macrophylla** Wall. in Wight & Arn., Prodr. 408. 1834; FBI. 3 : 54. 1880.

An erect to suberect annual herb, young stem  $\pm$  soft, 4 — angled; leaves opposite, pale-green, ovate-elliptic, acuminate, nerves distinct; flowers white in sessile axillary cymes; cocci dehiscing ventrally, the top not protruded between the calyx-teeth.

*Fl. & frt.* : Sept.-Oct.

Rare, usually growing as weed in waste land or among grass in rather sandy gravel soil along forest paths.

Distributed in Burma, Nicobar Islands and Assam. Prain (1903) and subsequent workers have not reported it from West Bengal and also there is not a single collection of this species in Herb. CAL from West Bengal. Hence, it is a new record for the state.

*Specimen examined* : Jalpaiguri district : Titi,  $\pm$  200 m (Madarihat range), Sikdar 681.

**Hedyotis monocephala** R. Br. ex Wall. in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. Ind. 3 : 63. 1880.

A prostrate or straggling stout herb with grooved branches; leaves 2-3.5 cm long, sessile, elliptic-lanceolate, acuminate, glabrous on both surfaces; stipules variable with recurved teeth; flowers in terminal capitate cymes.

*Fl. & frt.* : Jan.-Feb.

Rare, in swampy areas associated with *Veronica anagallis*, *Cotula hemisphaerica* and *Gnaphalium luteo-album* Linn. ssp. *affine* etc. This taxon can be easily identified by its sessile terminal capitate cymes, dark-brown leaves when dry and obscure nerves on the leaves.

Distributed in Assam and Burma. Prain (1903) and later workers, have not reported this taxon from West Bengal and there is not a single collection from the State in Herb. CAL. Hence a new record for West Bengal.

*Specimen examined* : Jalpaiguri district : Chilapata (Chilapata range), *Sikdar* 4300.

## ACANTHACEAE

*Strobilanthes anisophyllus* T. Anders in Cat. Pl. Hort. Bot. Calc. 43. 1861, and in Journ. Linn. Soc. 9 : 478. 1867 ; FBI. 4 : 462. 1884.

Erect undershrub, less than a metre in height ; leaves very unequal, nearly alternate, lanceolate-acuminate, narrowed into the petiole, margin serrated ; bracts elliptic-obtuse ; bracteoles shorter than the bracts ; flowers 2-2.5 cm long, bluish or pale-purple in cymose heads.

*Fl.* : Nov.

Rare, restricted to the lower hills from 800 to 1000 m altitude, often growing on exposed slopes or rocky plateaus among grass, *Selaginella*, *Begonia gigantea* and *Dicliptera roxburghiana*.

A new record for West Bengal, previously known to occur in Assam, Meghalaya (Khasi hills) and in Nagaland. There is not a single collection of this taxon from West Bengal in Herb. CAL.

*Specimens examined* : Jalpaiguri district : way to Buxaduars,  $\pm$  900 m (Buxaduar range), *Sikdar* 932 ; Buxaduar,  $\pm$  1000 m *Sikdar* 968.

## LAMIACEAE

*Pogostemon auricularius* (L.) Hassk. in Tijdsch. Nat. Geschied (ed. Hoeven & de Vriese), 10 : 127. 1843 ; El-Gazzar & Watson in Taxon 16 (3) : 187. 1967. *Dysophylla auricularia* (L.) Bl., Bijdr. 825. 1826 ; FBI. 4 : 638. 1885. *Mentha auricularia* L., Mant. Pl. 81. 1767.

Erect densely hairy annual branched herb with opposite leaves and pinkish-white flowers in dense terminal spikes ; corolla tube with hairy lobes.

*Fl. & frt.* : Nov.-May.

Grows in open moist areas among grass, in shady moist soil along forest paths and often in the forest associated with *Hygrophila salicifolia*, *Phyllanthus urinaria*, *Ischaemum* spp. etc. A very pretty herb when in full bloom. Rare.

Distributed in Sikkim, Assam, Maharashtra (Poona), South India and East Bengal. Prain (1903) recorded this species from Chittagong (Bangladesh) only. However, this taxon is not so far reported earlier from the State except the deposition of two old sheets in Herb. CAL without valid record from the localities as stated on the herbarium sheets. It is interesting to record its distribution in West Bengal after 87 years.

*Specimens examined* : Jalpaiguri district : Central Moraghat (Moraghat range), *Sikdar* 415 ; Poro forest (Nimati range), *Sikdar* 757 ; Mahakalguri, Alipurduar, *E.A. Heawood* 52 (21st Sept. 1891). Darjeeling district : Siliguri, *Clarke* 26464B (31.5.1875).

*Pogostemon elsholtzioides* Benth. in DC., Prodr. 12 : 153. 1848 ; FBI. 4 : 634. 1885.

Erect bushy, branched, small shrub, stem brownish to pink-red ; leaves 5-9.5  $\times$  1.2-2.5 cm, lanceolate, long-acuminate, glabrous, petiole short ; flowers pinkish with aromatic scent, in separate whorls forming interrupted upto 9 cm long spikes, often with purple tinge ; calyx whitish hoary.

*Fl.* : Nov.

Occasional, restricted to the Buxaduar hills upto  $\pm$  1200 m altitude, growing in dry rocky-gravel situations along the valleys in association with *Lantana camara* var. *aculeata*. It is an attractive plant when in full bloom.

Distributed in Bhutan and Meghalaya (Khasi hills). Mukerjee (1940) recorded this species from Assam and Bhutan only. After Mukerjee, it has not been reported from West Bengal.

*Specimens examined* : Jalpaiguri district : Buxaduar,  $\pm$  950 m (Buxaduar range), *Sikdar* 926 and  $\pm$  1050 m, *Sikdar* 970.

## POLYGONACEAE

*Persicaria viscosa* (Ham. ex D. Don) Nakai in *Rigakkai* 24 : 300. 1926 ; Hara, *Fl. E. Him.* 24. 1971. *Polygonum viscosum* Ham. ex D. Don, *Prodr. Fl. Nepal* 71. 1825 ; *FBI.* 5 : 36. 1886.

A slender annual with ascending soft hollow stem covered with spreading bristly hairs and bearing bright red flowers in long terminal racemes.

*Fl.* : Feb.-Apr.

Rare. Seen growing in moist soil on high ground by the side of a rice field. Flower colour persists even after drying.

Distributed in Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Nepal. Hara (*l.c.*) reported it from Kathmundu, 1400 m. Prain (1903) recorded it from Chittagong (Bangladesh) only. There are only two specimens in Calcutta Herbarium (CAL) collected by C. R. Das (1959) and A. K. Dutta (1965) from Jalpaiguri and Burdwan respectively without its valid record from West Bengal. Since then it has not been reported from West Bengal again. So the recent collection of the plant by the author from northern Bengal is a valid record of its distribution in West Bengal.

*Specimens examined* : Jalpaiguri district : Chilapata, side of paddy field (Chilapata range), *Sikdar* 4396 ; Rajabhatkhawa, (Rajabhatkhawa range), *C. R. Das* 11. Burdwan district ; Bhedia, *A. K. Dutta* 691.

## MYRISTICACEAE

*Knema erratica* (Hook. f. et Thoms.) J. Sinclair in *Gard. Bull. Singapore* 18 : 205. 1961. *Myristica erratica* Hook. f. et Thoms., *Fl. Ind.* 1 : 156. 1855. *M. longifolia* Wall. ex Bl. var. *erratica* Hook. f. et Thoms., *Fl. Brit. Ind.* 5 : 110. 1886.

Small to moderate-sized tree, twigs with conspicuous striations and furrows ; leaves 20-28  $\times$  3.0-5.0 cm, narrowly oblong or oblong-lanceolate, glabrous above, lower surface stellate hairy when young ; male flowers brown-tomentose, split down to half way into the perianth lobes ; fruit ellipsoid, densely covered with brownish tomentum.

*Fl. & frt.* : Jan.-May.

Rare. Growing wild along the hillslopes in somewhat shady situations. It is often confused with *K. linifolia* (Roxb.) Warb. but differs in shape and size of the flowers, bark and leaf-characters.

This taxon is reported so far in India from Sikkim, Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya. Prain (1903), however, recorded it from Chittagong (Bangladesh) only. This is the first report of the plant from West Bengal.

*Specimens examined* : Jalpaiguri district : Way to Buxaduar,  $\pm$  600 m (Buxaduar range), *Sikdar* 4594.

## EUPHORBIACEAE

*Claoxylon longipetiolatum* Kurz in *Journ. Asit. Soc. Beng.* 42 (2) : 244. 1873 ; *FBI.* 5 : 413. 1887.

A stout shrub up to 3 m high, stem appressed-pubescent ; leaves large, elliptic to ovate-oblong with acute-obtuse base, membranous, crenate-serrate or undulate, penninerved, slightly pubescent below ; flowers white in hispid racemes ; capsule deeply 3-lobed, hirsute with soft prickles.



*Fl. & frt.* : Feb.-Aug.

Rare. Grows luxuriantly along the margin of the evergreen forests preferably in cold-shady localities together with *Leea gigantea* and *Viburnum colebrookianum* only in the eastern ranges of the Jalpaiguri district.

J. D. Hooker (1887) included this plant as under imperfectly known species and mentioned only Andaman Islands as the locality in India. Further studies shows that it was also reported from Assam and Meghalaya and there is deposition of 4-sheets of this species in Herb. ASSAM. On the basis of a recent enquiry, this taxon does not occur in Andaman Islands. Hence the appearance of this plant in West Bengal for the first time is of botanical interest.

*Specimen examined* : Jalpaiguri district : North Rajabhatkhawa (Rajabhatkhawa range), Sikdar 6997.

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